



1838

# FABL II

**FUNDAMENTALS AND ADVANCES  
IN BALKAN LINGUISTICS**

**II**

**Folk, Areal and Balkan Linguistics**

**BOOK OF ABSTRACTS**

October 31, 2025

University of Belgrade — Faculty of Philosophy

Institute for the Study of Antiquity and Classical Heritage

# **Fundamentals and Advances in Balkan Linguistics**

II

Folk, Areal and Balkan Linguistics

## **Book of Abstracts**

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## Book of Abstracts

**Edited by**

Đorđe Božović & Orsat Ligorio

Belgrade, 2025



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# Introduction

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When we initiated FABL two years ago, in 2023, there was no other similar event, specifically devoted to Balkan linguistics, with an international outlook, scheduled for that year (Božović 2023). In contrast, quite a number of Balkan linguistics conferences is taking place in 2025. For instance, the 13<sup>th</sup> Congress of the International Association of South-East European Studies (AIESEE), postponed twice since 2023, has taken place in Skopje this year, under the auspices of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, featuring a whole-day session on linguistics. At practically the same time, an international conference for **Andrey N. Sobolev** to mark his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, with the topic “General, Balkan and Slavic linguistics: Synchrony, diachrony, areal studies”, was organised by his colleagues at the Institute for Linguistic Studies in St. Petersburg. In addition, the 2025 edition of the Central and South-East European travelling conference on theoretical linguistics *SinFonIJA (Syntax, Phonology and Language Analysis)*, which takes place annually in the area of former Austria-Hungary and Yugoslavia, was organised in Skopje a week later, for the first time with a special session devoted to the Balkan languages. We are delighted to contribute FABL II to such a thriving array.

The general topic of FABL II is “Folk, Areal and Balkan Linguistics”. The conference is organised by the Institute for the Study of Antiquity and Classical Heritage, a research unit affiliated with the Department of Classics at the University of Belgrade Faculty of Philosophy. This appropriately reflects the fact that the year 2025 marks the semicentennial of the passing of **Milan Budimir** (1891–1975), Academician and Professor of Classics at the University of Belgrade and a doyen of Palaeo-Balkan linguistics. At the same time, we owe this arrangement to the unprecedented collegiality and enthusiasm of **Orsat Ligorio**, Head of the Institute, whose vision and support made FABL II possible.

The conference features four invited talks on cutting-edge topics in such broadly construed field. Coming from Skopje, **Eleni Bužarovska** will give a talk on *Balkanization vs. de-Balkanization in grammar*, focusing on Macedonian conditional system in a diachronic and areal perspective. From Sofia, **Bilyana Mikhaylova**’s talk on *the Palaeo-Balkan world* will open the conference and its special thematic session on Palaeo-Balkan linguistics. Joining in from St. Petersburg, **Andrey N. Sobolev** will present an innovative research project titled *Functional Grammar of the Balkan Sprachbund*. From

Ljubljana, **Matej Šekli** will deliver a talk on *the hypothesised Central European Convergence Linguistic Area*, while focusing on the case of Slovene.

Twenty-three talks in total, contributed by over thirty (co-)authors from eighteen institutions across Europe and USA, will be given at FABL II in addition to the four invited talks. They showcase a depth of research topics, from formal approaches to South Slavic and Balkan languages, the structure and history of Albanian, language contact and dialectology, all the way to literary studies, linguistic anthropology and metaphor, thus continuing the trends set by the 2023 FABL meeting. We are pleased to announce that a selection of papers from the 2023 FABL meeting was published in the meantime in a special issue of the journal *Balcania et Slavia* (Ca' Foscari University of Venice), vol. 4(1) for 2024 (Božović & Trifunović 2024), and that a second issue containing another set of FABL papers is currently in press (vol. 5(1) for 2025).

Last but not least, we remain indebted to Academician **Aleksandar Loma** for guidance and advice.

*Đorđe Božović*

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# Programme

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## Fundamentals and Advances in Balkan Linguistics II

### Folk, Areal and Balkan Linguistics

Friday, 31 October 2025

8.30–9 Registration

9–9.40 Conference opening

Plenary talk: Bilyana Mikhaylova (*Sofia*)

#### **The Paleo-Balkan world**

(Chair: Orsat Ligorio)

9.45–10.50 Parallel sessions

#### **Session I (Chair: Aleksandar Trifunović)**

9.45–10.05 Madeleine Butschety (*N. Gorica*)

#### **The curious case of SerBo-Croatian *nego***

#### **Session II (Chair: Marina Andrijašević)**

9.45–10.05 Marina Andrijašević (*Belgrade*)

#### **Ancient sources in the work of Milan Budimir:**

#### **The continuity of Palaeo-Balkan linguistic research from antiquity to modern days**

10.05–10.25 Alberto Frasson (*Wrocław*) &  
Jelena Živojinović (*Graz*)

#### **Raising the bar: The journey of BCMS participles**

10.05–10.25 Orsat Ligorio (*Belgrade*)

#### **Illyrian ‘rock, crag’ & Serbo-Croatian *gripa***

10.25–10.45 Marko Simonović (*Graz*), Mirjana  
Mirić, Bojana Ristić & Svetlana Ćirković  
(*Belgrade*)

#### **Serbian loan verb adaptation in Gurbet Romani: Evidence from corpus and experimental research**

10.25–10.45 Danilo Savić (*Belgrade*)

#### ***Dalmatae* ‘people of the valley’**

10.50–11.05 Coffee break

11.05–11.40 Plenary talk: Eleni Bužarovska (*Skopje*)

**Balkanization vs de-Balkanization in grammar:**

**Macedonian conditional system**

(Chair: Đorđe Božović)

11.45–12.50 Parallel sessions

Session I (Chair: Danilo Savić)	Session II (Chair: Aleksandar Trifunović)
11.45–12.05 Giulio Imberciadori ( <i>Munich</i> ) <b>Albanian <i>bërtet</i> ‘shout’: Inner-Albanian prehistory and Indo-European etymology</b>	11.45–12.05 Liljana Mitkovska ( <i>Skopje</i> ) <b>Modally marked <i>se</i>-constructions in Macedonian</b>
12.05–12.25 Aleksandr Rusakov ( <i>St. Petersburg/Tirana</i> ) & Maria Morozova ( <i>St. Petersburg</i> ) <b>Albanian labile verbs in the Balkan context: A corpus study</b>	12.05–12.25 Boban Karapejovski ( <i>Skopje</i> ) <b>Is there a grammaticalized presumptive in Macedonian? On “<i>kje da</i>” forms in Balkan Slavic</b>
12.25–12.45 Irena Sawicka & Artur Karasiński ( <i>Toruń</i> ) <b>Acoustic characteristics of word stress in Albanian</b>	

12.50–13.05 Coffee break

13.05–13.40 Plenary talk: Andrey Sobolev (*St. Petersburg/Marburg*)

**Functional Grammar of the Balkan Sprachbund:**

**Presentation of a project**

(Chair: Orsat Ligorio)

13.45–14.50 Parallel sessions

Session I (Chair: Đorđe Božović)	Session II (Chair: Marina Andrijašević)
13.45–14.05 Marco Biasio ( <i>Pisa</i> ) <b>Dotting the -7s. Molise Croatian as a (diachronic) window into the morphosyntax of the Neo-Štokavian genitive plural</b>	13.45–14.05 Dušan Popović ( <i>Belgrade</i> ) <b>Latin words and terms of Latin origin in Đorđe Branković’s <i>Slavonic-Serbian Chronicles</i> (books 1–4)</b>

14.05–14.25 Aleksandar Trifunović ( <i>Ljubljana</i> ) & Đorđe Božović ( <i>Belgrade</i> ) <b>(Anti)balkanisms in Gallipoli Serbian</b>	14.05–14.25 Marija Pandeva ( <i>Skopje</i> ) <b>Expressing the blessings in the Macedonian folk literature</b>
14.25–14.45 Jelena Živojinović ( <i>Graz</i> ) <b>Clitic doubling as a Micro-Contact phenomenon in peripheral South Slavic</b>	14.25–14.45 Martyna Kokotkiewicz ( <i>Poznań</i> ) <b>The importance of teaching Ghëg as a standard language from the perspective of an L2 learner</b>

14.45–16 Lunch break

16–16.35 Plenary talk: Matej Šekli ( <i>Ljubljana</i> ) <b>The hypothesised Central European Convergence Linguistic Area: The case of Slovene</b> (Chair: Đorđe Božović)
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16.40–17.45 Parallel sessions

<b>Session I (Chair: Danilo Savić)</b> 16.40–17 Annemarie Sorescu-Marinković & Teodora Todorčić Miličević ( <i>Belgrade</i> ) <b>A newcomer to the Balkans? Chinese in the linguistic landscape of Serbia</b>	<b>Session II (Chair: Aleksandar Trifunović)</b> 16.40–17 Rezearta Murati ( <i>Scodra</i> ) <b>Language, identity, and movement: An anthropolinguistic study of transhumance in Albania</b>
17–17.20 Maria S. Morozova, Ekaterina V. Zhukovets, Marina A. Belova ( <i>Suloeva</i> ), Maria V. Gvozdkova & Danil A. Lonkin ( <i>St. Petersburg</i> ) <b>The challenges of annotating an oral bilingual corpus: Code-switching in the speech of Albanians in Budjak and Priazov'ye</b>	17–17.20 Gina Scarpete Walters ( <i>Arizona State</i> ) <b>Mapping the HEART: A comparative study of word associations in Balkan languages</b>
17.20–17.40 Maxim Makartsev ( <i>Oldenburg</i> ) <b>Reordering possession: A corpus study of contact effects on nominal syntax in Slavic dialects in Albania</b>	17.20–17.40 Olivier Winistörfer ( <i>Zurich</i> ) <b><i>Dirlada, jas odam Skopje – Atina</i>. Differential Place Marking in Balkan Slavic and beyond</b>
17.45 Conference closing Business meeting	

## Invited talks

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Eleni Bužarovska

(Ss. Cyril and Methodius University of Skopje)

### **Balkanization vs de-Balkanization in grammar:**

#### **Macedonian conditional system**

This presentation examines how language contact can exert opposing influences on the same grammatical structure, using the Macedonian conditional system as a case study. The system reflects multiple layers of contact-induced change across different historical periods. During the Ottoman period, due to the contact with other Balkan languages, the inherited Slavic conditional *bi*-construction fell out of use in almost all Macedonian dialects, surviving only in the northern periphery. It was replaced by a Balkan conditional pattern modeled on Greek, which combines a future marker with a past tense form (the imperfect) to express counterfactual situations. This system had two core patterns—one for realizable and one for counterfactual events—and allowed for encoding increased hypotheticality through the use of the subjunctive marker *da* (*na* in Greek) functioning as ‘if.’ In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, under Serbo-Croatian influence during the Yugoslav period, *bi*-based constructions were reintroduced into the Macedonian conditional system through the borrowed Serbian patterns with *ukoliko* and *kad*. The new *dokolku* and *koga bi* patterns triggered the restructuring of the system, enriching it with new forms and enabling the development of mixed models. This process of partial de-Balkanization not only expanded the system but also introduced a range of subtle semantic distinctions. The new forms, including hybrid ones, made it possible to express a more nuanced gradation of hypotheticality. This development is explored through an empirical investigation of conditional clauses in spoken Macedonian, particularly among younger speakers. It aims to show that these changes are part of a broader tendency in Macedonian toward transparency, that is, a greater degree of correlation between form and meaning.

## **The Paleo-Balkan world**

The presentation will attempt to outline the picture of the Paleo-Balkan world based on the attested linguistic material in Phrygian, Thracian, Daco-Moesian, Macedonian, and Illyrian, as well as on some elements of the pre-Greek Indo-European linguistic substrate (the so-called Pelasgian).

The linguistic material is derived from both glosses and onomastic data. The attestations from the Paleo-Balkan languages will be examined from an etymological perspective, categorized into thematic areas, largely following J. P. Mallory and Douglas Q. Adams, *The Oxford Introduction to Proto-Indo-European and the Indo-European World* (2006):

- Anatomy
- The Physical world: earth, fire, water, air, landscape
- Architecture and Home
- Clothing
- Family and Kinship
- Drinking and Foods
- Material culture (tools, weapons, metals)
- Flora and Fauna
- Colors

Although the Paleo-Balkan languages are attested fragmentarily, this approach will allow us to trace how the data from them relates to the overall picture of the Indo-European world.

## ***Functional Grammar of the Balkan Sprachbund:***

### **Presentation of a project**

The aim of the project is to create, for the first time in global scholarship, a theoretically grounded grammar of the Balkan Sprachbund (BSB) based on the theory of a linguistic union as a group of languages united by regular functional correspondences. Adhering to the heuristic paradigm of the humanities, the project addresses all classical structural levels of language and seeks to apply a range of the most suitable – both theoretical and experimental – methods for their investigation, utilizing digital technologies, including corpus-based approaches. The theoretical, synchronic-descriptive, functional grammar of the entire convergent group of languages, which includes Indo-European languages from four genealogical groups – Albanian, Romance, Slavic, and Greek – will engage with both standard (literary) and non-standard (dialectal and historical) language forms. This grammar will significantly expand our understanding of linguistic unions, the specific properties of Balkan languages, and the regularity of relationships among them, as well as the functional ranges of categories and units. In the first stage of the project's implementation, a targeted selection of a limited set of polyfunctional linguistic categories and units from the Balkan languages will serve to substantiate the research hypothesis regarding the existence of the BSB as a convergent group. In the second stage, a necessary and sufficiently broad set of categories and units will be examined, resulting in the creation of a comprehensive grammar and the formulation of an extended theory of the BSB. The project aims to become a model for subsequent research into the identification and study of groups of distantly related languages, and in the long term, to influence related fields such as history, cultural theory, and social theory. By applying a categorical approach to the understanding of linguistic phenomena, the project demonstrates the heuristic potential of methodologies specific to the humanities and aims to advance linguistic theory. The scholarly novelty of the project lies in its proposal to: (a) offer a rigorous definition of convergent language groups (linguistic unions), (b) place a primary focus on the functional aspect of linguistic units and categories, and (c) establish regular correspondences among them.

## **The hypothesised Central European Convergence Linguistic Area: The case of Slovene**

In genealogical linguistic research within the framework of Slavic comparative linguistics, the geneses of the individual Slavic languages and their dialect macro-areas are relatively well researched. Questions that still remain unanswered, however, concern the formation of the Slavic languages within the different hypothesised *convergence linguistic areas* (German *Sprachbund*, Russian *jazykovoj sojuz*). Apart from their evolution within the Slavic *dialect continuum*, the Slavic languages allegedly form a part of different *convergence linguistic areas*. As far as the “major” linguistic areas are concerned, Slavic is supposed to belong to the so-called *European linguistic area* or *Standard Average European* (SAE). Regarding “minor” European linguistic areas involving Slavic, at least two have found their way into scholarly discussion, namely the *Balkansprachbund* ‘Balkan linguistic area’ and the *mitteleuropäischer Sprachbund* ‘Central European convergence area’ (also the *Donausprachbund* ‘Danube convergence area’). The latter is traditionally said to include German, the so-called Central European Slavic languages, and Hungarian. As it turns out, the individual languages that form the alleged linguistic area do, in fact, display some common morphosyntactic features, for instance, the loss of synthetic past tense forms. According to the linguistic criteria for the definition of *convergence linguistic areas*, these are characterised, among other things, by a multidirectional linguistic influence as well as common contact-induced linguistic innovations in the domain of syntax and morphology. Using the theoretical approach and the methodology of historical linguistics as well as the linguistic material from Slovene, the contribution answers the question whether such linguistic commonalities are indeed the consequence of a multidirectional linguistic influence and can, consequently, be seen as a bundle of convergent linguistic changes within the hypothesised convergence area, or they are purely coincidental.

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## Contributed talks

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Marina Andrijašević

(University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philosophy)

### **Ancient sources in the work of Milan Budimir:**

#### **The continuity of Palaeo-Balkan linguistic research from antiquity to modern days**

As a classical philologist and a prominent researcher of Balkan cultural and linguistic prehistory, Academician Milan Budimir relied abundantly on ancient sources in his numerous works. Educated in the Greek and Latin scholarly tradition, Budimir applied his deep knowledge of ancient texts to the questions of Balkan philological archaeology. His methodology involved a detailed study of classical authors to support his theses on the linguistic and ethnic strata in the Balkans.

The goal of this paper is to explore the ancient sources which Budimir used in creating his Pelastic theory and linguistic theses concerning the Palaeo-Balkan area. Through detailed textual analysis, the study will investigate how Budimir employed authors such as Homer, Herodotus, Varro, Pliny the Elder and others in order to reconstruct the early linguistic landscape of the ancient Balkans. The research will shed light on the literary testimonies Budimir used to trace back the cultural and linguistic antecedents all the way to the primary origins (*istočnici*). We will try to answer the question to what kind of ancient evidence did he trust most – myth, historiography or philology. Our aim is to go through the major works of Milan Budimir, search for specific *loci* and see how he interpreted ancient writings as scientific linguistic evidence. We will discuss methodological aspects and interpretive biases that may have been involved. Furthermore, we will try to identify to which author he refers the most and in what context. For instance, his work draws heavily on Herodotus for ethnolinguistic research and tracing back the origin of Pelasgians. He considered Homeric texts as a key source for reconstructing pre-Greek language history, being rich in older Balkan linguistic influences. Additionally, Varro served as a main guide for Budimir's etymological inquiries. Therefore, we will notice that our first Serbian Palaeo-Balkanologist had predecessors in many ancient authors who shared the same enthusiasm for discovering the (linguistic) past.

The references for this study will include ancient sources to which Milan Budimir referred, his linguistic opus relating to Pre-Greek stratum and Pelasgian culture along with the literature pertinent to the reception and legacy of Budimir's scholarship.

**Keywords:** Milan Budimir, ancient sources, Palaeo-Balkan linguistics, diachronic linguistics

Marco Biasio

(University of Pisa)

### **Dotting the -ī's. Molise Croatian as a (diachronic) window into the morphosyntax of the Neo-Štokavian genitive plural**

**The issue.** Phenomena of morphological overabundance targeting genitive plural endings of Neo-Štokavian *e*-declension nouns with stems ending in a consonant cluster (e.g., *pògrešk-a*<sub>nom.sg</sub> 'mistake' → *pògreš-ā-k-ā*<sub>gen.pl</sub> / *pògrešk-ā*<sub>gen.pl</sub> / *pògrešk-ī*<sub>gen.pl</sub>) have been dealt with in the literature at least since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Bošnjak Botica & Polančec 2024: 285). Recent research has focused on the uneven functional expansion of *-ī*<sub>gen.pl</sub> across the Štokavian dialectal continuum, explaining its (diatopically and diamesically conditioned) increasing frequency as the possible output of the complex interaction of several synchronic structural mechanisms. Among those are the ongoing loss of quantitative vocalic distinctions (i.e., *-ǎ*<sub>nom.sg</sub> / *-ā*<sub>gen.pl</sub>) in Zagreb-based idiolects (Kapović 2018: 66–68) and the long ceased productivity of epenthetic processes which historically applied to consonant clusters per Havlík's law (Polančec & Bošnjak Botica 2024: 218–220). Still, such studies cannot easily account for similar overabundant patterns extending to *gen.pl* cells of *a*-declension nouns (e.g., *vòlt-Ø*<sub>nom.sg</sub> 'volt' → *vòlt-ā*<sub>gen.pl</sub> / *vòlt-ī*<sub>gen.pl</sub>; *pîv-o*<sub>nom.sg</sub> 'beer' → *pîv-ā*<sub>gen.pl</sub> / *pîv-ī*<sub>gen.pl</sub>), as well as to a variety of (mostly) bi- and trisyllabic *e*-declension nouns with single-consonant stems (e.g., *lúk-a*<sub>nom.sg</sub> 'harbor' → *lúk-ā*<sub>gen.pl</sub> / *lúk-ī*<sub>gen.pl</sub>; *žèn-a*<sub>nom.sg</sub> 'woman' → *žén-ā*<sub>gen.pl</sub> / *žèn-ī*<sub>gen.pl</sub>; *banán-a*<sub>nom.sg</sub> 'banana' → *banán-ā*<sub>gen.pl</sub> / *banán-ī*<sub>gen.pl</sub>). Also, previous overviews do not always discuss the diachronic instability of genitive plural endings of *e*-declension nouns (Kapović 2018: 62, fn. 67; 66, fn. 75), which cannot be captured by purely synchronic analyses.

**The proposal.** From a **synchronic** standpoint, I develop an alternative nanosyntactic account which takes  $-\bar{a}_{\text{gen.pl}}$  and  $-\bar{i}_{\text{gen.pl}}$  to be standing in a relation of pragmatic competition (i.e., no longer constrained by phonotactics only) as a result of a long-standing process of reorganization of the Neo-Štokavian nominal paradigm around declension classes only (*pace* Pophristic & Schuler 2021). More specifically, I propose a two-step formalization of the mechanisms that govern the licensing and distribution of *e*-declension genitive plural endings. First, endings of *e*-declension unmarked nouns, i.e., those triggering contextually indefeasible female presuppositions (Arsenijević 2021: 23–25), are spelled out via cyclic application of Superset Principle and Elsewhere Condition (Caha 2021: 9–13). The Superset Principle determines that the chosen ending must already realize a similar derived node in another declension class, that being *gen.pl* cells of *i*-declension nouns (e.g.,  $nôc-\emptyset_{\text{nom.sg}}$  ‘night’  $\rightarrow nòc-\bar{i}_{\text{gen.pl}}$ ). The Elsewhere Condition states that the chosen ending must compute *all* and *only* those features associated with *e*-declension unmarked nouns, that is, presuppositions related to animacy, referentiality, and gender characteristics. Second, the analogical patterns unevenly extend to *e*-declension marked nouns, including hypocoristics (e.g.,  $bák-a_{\text{nom.sg}}$  ‘granny’  $\rightarrow bák-\bar{a}_{\text{gen.pl}} / bák-\bar{i}_{\text{gen.pl}}$ ), pejoratives (e.g.,  $budàl-a_{\text{nom.sg}}$  ‘fool’  $\rightarrow budál-\bar{a}_{\text{gen.pl}} / budál-\bar{i}_{\text{gen.pl}}$ ), hybrid-agreement nouns (e.g.,  $vôđ-a_{\text{nom.sg}}$  ‘leader’  $\rightarrow vòđ-\bar{a}_{\text{gen.pl}} / vòđ-\bar{i}_{\text{gen.pl}}$ ) and slang and technical terms (e.g.,  $gìg-a_{\text{nom.sg}}$  ‘gigabyte’  $\rightarrow gîg-\bar{i}_{\text{gen.pl}}$ ). In both cases,  $-\bar{i}$  comes out as the optimal choice, in that it is the only ending which can systematically and unambiguously keep *e*-declension nouns apart from both their *a*- (which they share  $-\bar{a}_{\text{gen.pl}}$  with) and *i*-declension counterparts (which are almost exclusively associated with inanimate referents, save for the old-fashioned remnants of  $kć-\hat{i}_{\text{nom.sg}}$  ‘daughter’ and  $mât-i_{\text{nom.sg}}$  ‘mother’). **Diachronically**, supporting the historical, karstic-like continuity of this process of paradigmatic reorganization are data from the three surviving Molise Croatian enclaves in Southern Italy, whose spoken varieties feature both (Western) Neo-Štokavian and (Southern) Čakavian-Ikavian elements dating back to the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Breu 2017). Molise Croatian nouns formally comparable to the Neo-Štokavian *e*-declension do not take  $-\bar{a}_{\text{gen.pl}}$  at all, licensing either  $-\bar{i}$  (e.g.,  $zvízd-a_{\text{nom.sg}}$  ‘star’  $\rightarrow zvízd-\bar{i}_{\text{gen.pl}}$ ) or  $-\bar{i}$  (e.g.,  $čipul-a_{\text{nom.sg}}$  ‘onion’  $\rightarrow čipul-i_{\text{gen.pl}}$ ), with a closed set of nouns still preserving the old Čakavian null variant (e.g.,  $krāv-a_{\text{nom.sg}}$  ‘cow’  $\rightarrow krāv-\emptyset_{\text{gen.pl}}$ ). Apart from confirming the developmental chronology of  $-\bar{a}_{\text{gen.pl}}$  across Neo-Štokavian isoglosses (Johnson 1972), data from Molise Croatian seem to corroborate the hypothesis of  $-\bar{i}_{\text{gen.pl}}$  being a diachronically stable, ‘last resort’ strategy Neo-Štokavian nominal paradigms are prone to adopt in order to resolve the structural tension between declension class assignment and gender specification.

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## The curious case of SerBo-Croatian *nego*

Across Slavic Balkan languages (Bulgarian, Macedonian, SerBo-Croatian, Slovenian) we find two intriguing correlations regarding constructions of degree or temporal comparison. First, the same or an almost analogous expression functions as the standard marker *as* in equatives and as the preposition *than* in (clausal, cf. Pancheva 2006 a.o.) comparatives (see also Haspelmath & Buchholz

1998; Rett 2013, 2014, a.o.); illustrated in (1a), and (1b), respectively. In Bulgarian and Macedonian, *than* differs from *as* only by the attachment of the prefix *ot-* ‘from’.

- (1) a. x ... visok { **kot**<sub>SLO</sub>/ **kolkoto**<sub>BG</sub>/ **kolku**<sub>MAC</sub> } y  
 x tall as how-much how-much y  
 ‘x (is) as tall as y’
- b. x ... { višj<sub>SLO</sub>/ po-visok<sub>BG/MAC</sub> } { **kot**<sub>SLO</sub>/ **ot-kolkoto**<sub>BG</sub>/ **ot-kolku**<sub>MAC</sub> } y  
 x tall.COMP COMP-tall than from-how-much y  
 ‘x (is) taller than y’

Second, among those languages, *pred(-)* ‘before’- and *do(-)/k(-)* ‘until’-sentences are formed via the usage of similar elements, and are subject to similar conditions. In the latter case, an occurrence of negation is obligatory in the second part of the sentence; whereas in the former, negation may or may not occur without any change in meaning (cf. Krifka 2010 for German).

- (2) a. Marija ostane budna, **dokler** Janez \*(ne) pride domov.  
 Marija stay.3SG awake until Janez NEG come.3SG home  
 ‘Marija stays awake until Janez does (literally: not) come home.’ (SLO)
- b. Marija ne spi **preden** Jovan (ne) pride domov.  
 Marija NEG sleep.3SG before Jovan NEG come.3SG home.  
 ‘Marija does not sleep before Jovan does (not) return home.’ (SLO)

However, SerBo-Croatian (SC) represents a striking exception regarding both correlations just illustrated. In SC, *kao* ‘like’, *koliko* ‘how much’ or *ono-/to-like* ‘as/that much’ can serve as standard marker in equatives; whereas *nego* (roughly: ‘than, but.CORRECTIVE’) takes over the function of the preposition in a clausal comparative. In contrast to the other Slavic Balkan languages, we find this very same element (i.e. *nego*) accompanying *pre* ‘before’ in sentences like (2b) as well as in corrective adversative coordinations, meaning ‘but’; all shown in (3).

- (3) a. Mačka je više pospana **nego** (što je) pas.  
 cat is.3SG more sleepy.FEM than what is.3SG dog  
 ‘The cat is more sleepy than the dog is.’ (SC)
- b. Marija nije zaspala pre **nego** što se Jovan (ni)je vratio kući.  
 Marija N.AUX slept before than what REFL Jovan N.AUX returned home  
 ‘Marija did not fall asleep before Jovan did (not) return home.’ (SC)

c. Nije                    mačka    spavala na sofi,        **nego**    (\*što) pas.  
NEG.AUX.3SG    cat        slept    on sofa.LOC    but.CORR    what dog  
'Not the cat slept on the sofa, but the dog did.'  
(SC)

This exceptional pattern of SC raises the question of the special role of *nego*. Put differently, what is it about *nego*'s meaning that allows us to use it in all these constructions? – notably, in contrast to the other Slavic Balkan languages that lack such an element. Moreover, can all usages from (3) be traced back to a single lexical entry? The analysis presented here argues in favor of a positive answer. In particular, I propose that *nego*'s meaning consists of two components: a negative, and an anaphoric one; paraphrasable as '(and) not so' (see e.g. Landman 2006 on 'so'). The specific meaning *nego* receives is claimed to depend on the kind of element *nego* takes as its antecedent for comparison; shedding new light on an undertheorized analogy: between equative/punctual *until* constructions and comparative/*before (not)* sentences.

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## Raising the bar: The journey of BCMS participles

Participles have been the focus of a large number of studies in formal linguistics (Alexiadou, Gehrke, and Schäfer 2014, Borik and Gehrke 2019, Babby and Franks 1998, Embick 2004, Gehrke 2015, Marín and Fábregas 2021, Bešlin 2025, a.o.). Most of these studies address the nature of passive past participles. This abstract focuses instead on the diachronic development of active present participial forms in Bosnian-Croatian-Montenegrin-Serbian (BCMS), traditionally labeled as *converbs* and examines their syntactic reanalysis from verbal to adjectival uses.

In BCMS, converbs qualify as adjuncts (1) but can also be used as adjectives (2):

(1) Zaspao-o je čitaj-ući knjigu.

fall.asleep-PTCP.PST AUX read-PTCP.PRS book

‘He fell asleep [while] reading a book.’

(2) Id-uć-eg petk-a slavi-mo Zdravk-ov rođendan.

go-PTCP.PRS-GEN Friday-GEN celebrate-PRS.1PL Zdravko-POSS birthday

‘Next Friday we celebrate Zdravko’s birthday.’

We propose that the two uses exhibited by BCMS represent two separate outcomes in the grammaticalization of the original OCS form in (3): as adjuncts, converbs behave as modifiers (1); as adjectives, they modify an NP (2).

(3) съзираахъ же сѣ между собоу оученици, не

look-3PL.PST.IPFV PTCL be.3PL among self disciple-NOM.PL not

домыслиаще о комъ глеть.

understand-PTCP.PRS.NOM.PL about whom speak.3SG.PRS

‘Then the disciples looked at one another, not understanding of whom he spoke.’

(Codex Zographensis, John 13:22; cf. Bjørnflaten 2009)

The present abstract aims at explaining the syntactic change that led to the adjunct and the fully grammaticalized adjectival use in modern BCMS.

We propose that the OCS structure (3) qualifies as a small clause introducing a progressive

AspP and is adjoined to VP. A PRO is merged in Spec-AspP and is bound by the postverbal argument of the matrix verb, triggering agreement. A  $\varphi$ P is merged on top of AspP; the  $\varphi$ P allows the matrix verb to select the adjunct and assign case to it. At spell-out, this operation licenses agreement on the participle.

(4) [TP [VP [SC [ $\varphi$ P [AspP PRO [Asp ... ]]]]]]

We argue that the BCMS structure in (1) similarly qualifies a small clause, but in this case it grammaticalizes as a TP-adjunct, in line with Roberts and Roussou 2003 upward grammaticalization hypothesis. As predicted by the authors, upward grammaticalization also involves loss of agreement marking; we propose that no  $\varphi$ P is merged on top of AspP, disallowing agreement.

(5) [TP [SC [AspP PRO [Asp ... ]]] [VP]]

The second possible grammaticalization path in BCMS (2) leads to the loss of independent predication and syntactic structure, evolving from small clauses to adjectival modifiers as shown in (2). In this case, the  $\varphi$ P is converted into a categorial  $a$ P via recategorization (Alexiadou 2001). Additionally, we preliminarily assume that further structural simplification at the internal AspP level of the participle is expected, which would result in a [ $a$ P [VP]] structure, as we will further detail.

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### **Albanian *bërtet* ‘shout’:**

#### **Inner-Albanian prehistory and Indo-European etymology**

Despite the many works devoted to Albanian etymology (e.g., SE, AE, and AED), Albanian still represents one the Balkan languages, whose inherited lexicon poses the hardest etymological challenges. The present paper focuses on a specific etymological problem of Albanian and aims to shed new light on the origin and prehistory of the verb *bërtet* (aorist *briti*) ‘shout’.

I first discuss the (Old) Albanian attestations of *bërtet* and show that they point to the reconstruction of a Proto-Albanian paradigm with a present stem *\*bríta/i-* beside an aorist stem *\*brít-*. I then critically review the previous etymological explanations of Alb. *bërtet* and argue most of them to be unconvincing. Building on a succinct hint by Mann (1977: 180), I thus explore the possibility of an alternative connection of Alb. *bërtet* with the rare Latin verb *fritinnīō* ‘twitter’ and its word family. This leads me to the reconstruction of a so far overlooked Proto-Indo-European (PIE) root, which I claim to have the shape *\*b<sup>h</sup>reǵt-* and to mean ‘shout, cry out’ vel sim. Finally, I briefly discuss some Celtic items, which potentially also belong to the PIE root *\*b<sup>h</sup>reǵt-*.

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## Is there a grammaticalized presumptive in Macedonian?

### On “kje da” forms in Balkan Slavic

The particle-conjunction *da* has been a subject to many analyses in the Macedonian language, as well as in its Balkan context. Moreover, it is a part of the formation of the so called *da-construction*, as a specialised form for expressing the old infinitive and its usage in some subjunctive and optative meanings are examined by numerous researchers (Конески 1986; Тополињска 1995; Илиевски 1988; Минова-Ѓуркова 2000). From a historical point of view, we find examples of the *da-construction* preceded by the particle *ќе* which is used for expressing the future tense in Macedonian. Such examples can be found in most of the XIX century works, like in the example (1).

- (1) И црви **ќе да** ги јадат и гризат. [...] Така тие човеци **ќе да** се у љутаго мучитеља  
дјавола. (Слово исказаное, 19)

However, in contemporary context the situation differs from the original use of this form (*ќе* + *da-construction*). The examples (2) and (3)

- (2) Тој **ќе да** имаше 12 години.

- (3) **Ќе да** е така.

can be transformed as: *Му се чинеше/Претпоставуваше дека има 12 години – It looked like/He assumed he was 12 years old* and *Мислеше/Претпоставуваше/Му се чинеше дека е така – He thought/He assumed/It looked like it's like that*. Actually, the constructions with *ќе да* are blocked with an addition modal operator: *\*Можеби ќе да имаше 12 години. – He might have been 12 years old*.

Our main hypothesis is that one way of grammaticalization (Lehman 2002) of the semantic category presumptive in the Macedonian language is through the verb forms preceded by the particles *ќе* and *да*. That means that the forms: *ќе* + *да* + *verbum finitum* express (on a regular basis, always) presumptive, and thus are a grammaticalized (separate, specialized) way of expressing the respective category. We will demonstrate this phenomenon through various examples from the Macedonian contemporary literature and online media.

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### **The importance of teaching Gheg as a standard language from the perspective of an L2 learner**

The (Northern) Gheg dialect (*gegërishtja*, *gëgnishtja*) and the (Southern) Tosk dialect (*toskërishtja*) are the two main groups of dialects of Modern Albanian. While the Standard Albanian is based on Tosk, the variety spoken in the whole area of Kosovo, Northern Albania, the albanophone

regions of Montenegro and the majority of those in North Macedonia is Gheg. However, there are no institutionalized means of acquisition of Gheg Albanian.

At the same time, Gheg has a rich literary tradition and flourishing literary life with many authors choosing it as the language of their works. The Gheg variety has a long and well-constituted literary tradition, much richer than the one of Tosk, which in 1972 was eventually established as a literary standard for all Albanian-speaking areas. The historical struggle of different language commissions for the unification and standardization of language is of unquestionable value. One of its main purposes was to eliminate analphabetism. Moreover, in the era of National Awakening the language played a symbolical role of a factor unifying the nation. Nevertheless, in the light of changing circumstances when there is no longer need for defending the national identity, literature written in local languages and dialects constitutes no threat to the role of the standard. However, while Classical Gheg literature has been researched upon to such extent that even non-Albanian speakers have some insight into it, the modern literature remains unavailable for them.

Modern writers, such as for example Migjen Kelmendi, Zejnullah Rrahmani, Abdullah Zeneli, following this literary tradition, cultivate the literature written in Gheg. Therefore, a L2 learner of Albanian can have considerable problems exploring Albanian literature, as a significant part of it has been created in a variety they cannot fully comprehend. The aim of this paper is to deliver some literary examples of contemporary authors writing in Gheg, important for the current literary scene, that could serve as a trigger to consider Gheg as a language that should be taught and learned separately from/simultaneously with the Standard Albanian and to discuss the possibility of creating a coursebook of Gheg as a foreign language. Excerpts from some exemplary novels will be presented in order to demonstrate that the differences between Tosk and Gheg varieties are significant enough, highlighting points that may cause problems for Albanian language learners.

**Keywords:** Gheg, varieties of Albanian, Gheg literature, L2 teaching, language coursebooks

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### Illyrian ‘rock, crag’ & Serbo-Croatian *gripa*

Serbo-Croatian *grīpa* ‘rock’ is generally understood to be an Illyrian loanword cognate to Albanian *karpë* ‘rock’ and Italian *crappa* ‘rock, crag’. It serves as the point of departure for the formation of several place names, including *Grīpe*, *Gřbalj*, as well as *Crepis*, *Criapis* (both of which are attested in the Latinate documents from the Middle Ages). The latter forms, along with the Albanian and Italian cognates, point to an initial *\*kr-* while the Serbo-Croatian forms seem to be pointing to an initial *\*gr-*. This presentation argues that the presence of *gr-* in Serbo-Croatian does not indicate an underlying alternation between *\*kr-* and *\*gr-* in Illyrian. Rather, it reflects a shift from *\*kr-* to *\*gr-* that likely occurred as the word was being transmitted from Illyrian to Serbo-Croatian **via Balkan Latin**. A comparable development can be seen in Latin *cribrum* ‘sieve’ (via *\*cribum*) > Serbo-Croatian *grīva* ‘vineyard’ (named after its sieve-like pattern).

**Key words:** Illyrian, Balkan Latin, Serbo-Croatian, historical phonetics.



## **Reordering possession: A corpus study of contact effects on nominal syntax in Slavic dialects in Albania**

Several descriptions of the Western Macedonian dialects in contact with Albanian note an *increased* NAdj word order within adjectival nominal phrases compared to dialects outside of the contact zone and standard Macedonian. This shift is interpreted as a contact-induced change under the Albanian and Aromanian influence (Jashar-Nasteva 1998, 32; Koneski 1986, 126–27, see the most recent overview of territorial varieties where this shift has been reported in Makartsev 2025, 45–46). Moreover, Koneski notes that in some Western Macedonian dialects the full possessive pronouns (which have adjectival morphology in Macedonian) *obligatorily* follow the noun. This suggests that, at least in some Western Macedonian dialects, there are differences in relative frequencies of the conservative (AdjN, PossN) versus the contact-supported word order (NAdj, NPoss) and that NPoss is more frequent than PossN and NAdj.

A recent study (Makartsev 2025) presented an analysis of sociolinguistic factors—age, gender, residence type (rural versus urban), and type of community dwelling (compact versus dispersed)—that influenced the word order of adjectives and nouns within NPs in the Slavic dialects of Albania, based on a newly launched corpus (Makartsev and Arkhangelskiy 2024).

In my prospective presentation, I will discuss the relative frequencies of full possessive pronouns in various Macedonian and Štokavian dialects in Albania with respect to the same sociolinguistic factors, using the same corpus. This quantitative analysis will help evaluate the existing claims regarding the distribution of the conservative vs. contact-induced word order by the NPs with possessive pronouns in the Slavic-Albanian contact zone and will provide further insight into the sociolinguistic parameters that may foster or hinder contact-induced change in such contact settings.

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### Modally marked *se*-constructions in Macedonian

This presentation focuses on a set of reflexive constructions that acquire modal interpretations which cannot be straightforwardly attributed to any individual formal component (covert modality). They are characteristic not only of Macedonian, but also of the other South Slavic and some Balkan languages. The constructions under consideration include: (a) ‘quasi-passive reflexive constructions’ expressing internal, non-epistemic modality (Fried 2007, Mitkovska and Bužarovska 2021), such as **possibility** (1), **necessity** (2) or **generality** (3);

(1) *Ovie pečurki se jadat*. ‘These mushrooms can be eaten.’

(2) *Taka ne se zboruva*. ‘One should not speak like that.’

(3) *So rabota se postignuva uspeh*. ‘Success is achieved through work.’

(b) ‘stative reflexive-dative constructions’ (Rivero 2004, Kallulli 2006, Dimitrova 2015, Mitkovska 2019) indicating internal necessity or desire on the part of the dative referent (4); (c) ‘reflexive-dative constructions with verbs of perception and cognition’ that imply **epistemic uncertainty** (5); (d) ‘reflexive constructions denoting **accidental, unintentional events**’ (Rivero 2004, Kallulli 2006), which suspend the volitionality of a causative predicate (6).

(4) *Mi se spie*. ‘I feel sleepy.’

(5) *Mi se vide zagrižen*. ‘He seemed worried to me.’

(6) *Mi se isturi mlekoto*. ‘The milk spilled on me.’

Although some of these constructions have been discussed individually and compared with non-modal reflexive constructions in specific languages, a comprehensive account appears to be lacking. The main goal of this investigation is to determine the modal meanings these constructions

express and the mechanisms through which such meanings arise. The analysis is framed within the theoretical grounds of Construction Grammar, which holds that constructions are form-meaning pairings, with certain aspects of meaning not fully predictable from their component parts. It is argued that the modal interpretations emerge from the interplay between the typical features of the lexical and grammatical elements and a cluster of formal, semantic, and pragmatic properties characteristic of each construction. It is further assumed that modal reflexive constructions occupy a transitional zone between active and passive voice, developing as a result of extension of the anticausative reflexive construction to contexts that invite reanalysis. In this sense, the study offers new insights into the complex nature of the reflexive continuum.

**Key words:** diathesis, covert modality, reflexive constructions, dative case, construction grammar

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## **The challenges of annotating an oral bilingual corpus: Code-switching in the speech of Albanians in Budjak and Priazov'ye**

The paper discusses challenges of creation and prospects of research using an annotated bilingual speech corpus of the Albanian old diaspora, which is located in four villages in the regions of Budjak and Priazov'ye. The texts presented in the corpus were recorded during fieldwork in 2005–2013. The purposes of creating the corpus are to make the results of documenting a standalone Albanian variety available to linguists, all interested users, and speech community members, as well as to investigate two principal types of contact-related phenomena, borrowing and code-switching, in the speech of multilinguals who, in addition to Albanian, are fluent in Russian and, in some cases, other languages.

Bilingual speech corpora annotated for code-switching and other contact-related phenomena are few in number but quite diverse in terms of the principles of data representation and markup. In this regard, one of the main tasks of our research is to develop solutions for transcribing linguistic data and annotating contact phenomena in the spontaneous speech of Albanian bilinguals in Budjak and Priazov'ye. The solutions can subsequently be used for annotation of texts from other Albanian diaspora communities, both old (Arvanites in Greece, Arbresh in Italy, Albanians in Mandritsa) and modern, and applied in similar corpora of other languages.

First, we'll briefly discuss our theoretical and practical solutions for selection, metatext markup, and transcription of texts in our corpus. In particular, we propose using several layers of transcription to make the data accessible to different users: professional linguists, students, and representatives of the language community. For further annotation of contact-related phenomena, the text is divided into prosodic units limited by pauses. As the experience of some existing speech corpora shows, this approach is justified when working with spontaneous speech. For example, in the New Mexico Spanish-English Bilingual Corpus the unit of text segmentation is an intonationally distinguished speech segment rather than a syntactic unit. The prosodic organization of the text is

further considered in close connection with its syntactic structure (Torres Cacoullos, Trevis 2018: 53–56; Torres Cacoullos 2020).

Then we'll focus on the main approaches to the interpretation of single-word insertions in one language into speech in another language and on the tagset we developed for annotation of contact-related phenomena. In general, the theoretical approach we have chosen for annotating single-word inclusions assumes that code-switches and established borrowings are not marked differently in the annotation. Distinguishing between code-switching and borrowing is a well-known theoretical problem in the study of bilingual speech, see e.g. Myers-Scotton 2006; Haspelmath 2009; Poplack 2018. Our corpus and its annotation are tools for studying such problems, so we do not offer ready-made solutions here.

Special attention is paid to single-word switches, including the so-called bare forms. They are defined as forms with zero marking in the recipient language and the donor language (Poplack 2018), or as elements of the embedded language that do not receive morphological marking according to the rules of the matrix language (Myers-Scotton 2002: 113, 2006: 255) and do not have grammatical markers that would be expected in the embedded language (Myers-Scotton 1992: 33). In our talk, we'll discuss the possible interpretations of single-noun inclusions that resemble bare forms (but are not necessarily bare), which can be proposed for situations of interaction between genetically related languages with nominal inflection systems, such as Albanian and Russian. Along with single nouns, we briefly discuss other single-word insertions, such as verbs, adjectives and the uninflected parts of speech, and demonstrate the ways of tagging them in the code-switching markup of the corpus of Albanian bilingual speech in Budjak and Priazov'ye.

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### **Language, identity, and movement: An anthropolinguistic study of transhumance in Albania**

This study explores the interrelationship between language, culture, and mobility through the phenomenon of transhumance in the north of Albania. Transhumance – the seasonal migration of pastoral communities – has significantly influenced not only the socio-economic structure of these highland regions but also their linguistic and cultural expressions. This research combines linguistic analysis, ethnolinguistic documentation, and anthropological observation to investigate how transhumant groups articulate and preserve their identities through language.

The study focused on lexical fields specific to pastoral life – terms for livestock, grazing routes, weather, tools, and social organization – highlighting the precision and richness of this domain-specific vocabulary. These lexical items serve not only practical purposes but also encode cultural knowledge and collective memory. The findings show that transhumant communities sustain a distinctive linguistic repertoire that reflects their adaptation to both landscape and social environment. Specialized vocabulary allows for effective communication in challenging ecological contexts, while traditional expressions and proverbs reinforce group cohesion. Code-switching between standard Albanian and regional dialects is employed contextually, reflecting varying levels of formality and internal community dynamics. Gender differences in vocabulary usage were also observed, particularly in kinship terminology and task-specific expressions, indicating differentiated linguistic roles within the pastoral economy.

This paper argues that transhumance in northern Albania is more than a livelihood practice – it constitutes a cultural system where language plays a key role in transmitting environmental knowledge, social norms, and historical continuity. The linguistic practices of these communities are vital indicators of intangible heritage and offer valuable insights into how traditional ways of life persist and adapt in modern contexts. By examining this interplay between language and mobility, the study contributes to broader discussions on linguistic diversity and the anthropology of space and movement.

**Keywords:** transhumance, ethnolinguistics, language anthropology, Albanian dialects, pastoral vocabulary

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### Expressing the blessings in the Macedonian folk literature

The blessings (as well as the curses) are an important and integral part of every culture. The desires and fears of the people are reflected through them, and especially their religiosity given that God versus the devil/the Satan are the main figures in these constructions. Through the texts written by the collectors of folk works (Cepenkov, Shapkarev, Sprostranov) we will analyze the blessings represented in the Macedonian folk tradition, examining the vocabulary and certain dialect features.

As a main features of the blessings, we will describe the *da-construction* in the Macedonian language, also known as optative, subjunctive or conjunctive (Минова-Ѓуркова 2000), and the use of the particle *neka*, as shown in the examples:

- (1) *Да ти се позлатат рацете* (May your hands turn gold)
- (2) *Бог нека оди со тебе* (May God go/be with you).

In this paper we will also analyze other grammatical categories that appear in the expression of blessings in the Macedonian language, such as the use of the forms of the perfect tense (Конески 2020):

- (3) *Дал ти Господ добро!* (May Gog give you good things)



(4) *Пустос ти помогол! (May God help you)*

and the variant of example (3) with the imperative form (as well as other examples where the imperative is used in the expression of the blessing).

(5) *Дaj ти бог добро! (May God give you good things).*

In this presentation, through various examples from the Macedonian folk literature we aim to make a classification of the most repetitive verbal forms and to examine the language mostly used to express the blessings.

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## Latin words and terms of Latin origin in Đorđe Branković's Slavonic-Serbian Chronicles (books 1–4)

Taking as a starting point the forms of the Latin words as well as the terms of Latin origin, included in the critical edition of the first 4 books of the chronicler-historiographical work written by

one of the earliest Serbian secular authors in the Early Modern epoch, the author of the present contribution attempts, albeit summarily, to survey and explain the basic characteristics of the Branković's acquaintance with and application of the subject under discussion. The goal of this analysis, at least in part, shall be obtained by taking into consideration, on the one hand, Branković's contemporary philological-antiquarian procedures, and on the other, the entire cultural-historical background standing behind the emergence of his *Chronicles*.

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### **Albanian labile verbs in the Balkan context: A corpus study**

It has been noted that Balkan languages are characterized by the phenomenon of lability, i.e. the same verb can be used transitively and intransitively without changing its form (Friedman & Joseph 2025). Friedman (2010) suggested that lability represents a Balkanism of “scalar” type, manifested to varying degrees in different Balkan languages. Recent studies attempt to rank the Balkan languages according to the prevalence of this phenomenon. In this ranking, Macedonian and Greek occupy the top positions, while Albanian is among the languages with the least representation of lability (Bužarovska & Mitkovska 2022, see also Makartsev, Wahlström & Escher 2024).

Though Albanian has been mentioned among the Balkan languages with the least representation of lability, the number of labile verbs in this language is quite substantial. It is worth noting that Albanian can use ambitransitives for four out of the 18 pairs of contrasting transitive-intransitive verbs in the diagnostic list by Nichols et al. (2004): *die — kill* (1), *learn — teach*, *boil — boil*, *sleep — be asleep*. Studies dedicated to lability in Albanian are extremely scarce. Dhrimo (1965) mentions around 30 Albanian verbs that can be employed both transitively and intransitively. The only existing up to the present time study of lability in modern Albanian gives a list of about 50 verbs showing lability (Diveeva 2013). Using the Albanian National Corpus (ANC) with more than 31 mln words, we conducted a corpus-based study of eight verbs demonstrating P-lability and belonging to the various semantic groups, which are predisposed to lability from semantic point of view, according to linguistic-typological studies of this phenomenon (Letuchiy 2013). The study has shown

that Albanian verbs behave differently in this respect, demonstrating the different degree of variation between non-active and active intransitive usages (Morozova, Rusakov 2025).

From a semantic perspective, most of the analyzed verbs exhibit an anticausative type of lability (1–2), as well as the rarer reciprocal mobility.

- (1) *Pris-ni*                      *panxhar-in*                      *në*                      *kubikë*                      *dhe*  
cut-IMP.2PL                      beetroot(M)-ACC.SG.DEF                      in                      cube(M).DIR.PL                      and  
*zie-je-ni*                      *pak*                      *minuta.*  
boil-3SG.ACC-IMP.2PL                      few                      minute(F).DIR.PL  
‘Dice the beetroot and boil it for a few minutes.’ (“Panorama”, 05.12.2015)
- (2) *Pasi*                      *uj-i*                      *ka*                      *zier,*                      *hidh-ni*  
after                      water(M)-NOM.SG.DEF                      have-PRS.3PL                      boil.PTCP                      throw-IMP.2PL  
*hithra-t*                      *dhe*                      *lër-i-ni*                      *të*                      *zie-jnë*  
nettle(F)-ACC.SG.DEF                      and                      leave-3pl.acc-imp.2PL                      SBJV                      boil-PRS.3PL  
*për*                      *një*                      *minutë.*  
for                      one                      minute(F).DIR.SG  
‘Once the water has boiled, add the nettles and let them boil for a minute.’  
(“Agjencia Telegrafike Shqiptare”, 25.02.2017)

In the present report, based on the study of a more or less comprehensive list of Albanian verbs exhibiting P-lability, we will attempt to clarify the position of Albanian with respect to this parameter among the Balkan languages. Special attention will be given to the comparison between Albanian and Macedonian — the Balkan language that demonstrates the highest degree of lability, according to previous literature (Makartsev et al. 2024).

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### ***Dalmatae* ‘people of the valley’**

The name of the *Dalmatae*, one of the largest tribal communities in Illyricum, is interpreted as *\*dalmā-t-*, a derivative of a Palaeo-Balkan (Illyrian?) word *\*dalmā* cognate to various words for ‘valley, dale’ in other Indo-European languages, such as German *Tal*, English *dale*, Middle Welsh *dol*, Serbo-Croatian *dô* (genitive *dôla*), which are typically reconstructed as *\*d<sup>h</sup>ol-o-* (or *\*d<sup>h</sup>ol-eh<sub>2</sub>-* in case of Celtic). This comparison implies that the *Delmatae* are named after the mountainous terrain of their homeland in central Dalmatia, while the word *\*dalmā* comes from an earlier *\*d<sup>h</sup>ol-meh<sub>2</sub>-*, itself a derivative with the suffix *\*-mo-/\*-meh<sub>2</sub>-*. At first glance, *\*dalmā* seems to be an outlier amongst its proposed cognates, but it turns out that a series of possibly related Greek forms, albeit with slightly aberrant semantics, may resolve this issue: θαλάμη ‘shelter, den’, θάλαμος ‘type of an interior chamber’, θόλος ‘round building’. Taken together, the Greek forms exhibit the notions of a sheltered or an encircled space (θαλάμη, θάλαμος) of circular or concave shape (θόλος), that in an abstract sense are not unlike the image of mountain valleys and ravines of Dalmatia. Furthermore, the comparison between θαλάμη (etc.) < *\*d<sup>h</sup>lh<sub>2</sub>-meh<sub>2</sub>-* and *\*dalmā* < *\*d<sup>h</sup>lh<sub>2</sub>-meh<sub>2</sub>-* or *\*d<sup>h</sup>olh<sub>2</sub>-meh<sub>2</sub>-*

implies that the Indo-European form must have contained a laryngeal *\*h<sub>2</sub>*, and that it should therefore be reconstructed as *\*d<sup>h</sup>olh<sub>2</sub>-*. On the other hand, the exact pre-form of *\*dalmā* is not known, as it depends on various speculative phonological assumptions. It is also unclear whether this correspondence stems from a shared innovation in Greek and in the language of the *Dalmatae*, or if it represents parallel but unrelated developments. Finally, the Serbo-Croatian dialectal form *dùmača* ‘ravine’ (cf. Dumača, tributary of the Sava near Šabac, Serbia), may represent a distant trace of the original Palaeo-Balkan (Illyrian?) word.

**Keywords:** Illyrian, Ancient Greek, onomastics, etymology, historical phonology.

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### **Acoustic characteristics of word stress in Albanian**

The literature on the Albanian stress is very limited. So far, it has not been possible to formulate a rule determining the place of stress. The only true assessment is that the Albanian stress is free and in inflection it is basically immobile. However, two clear tendencies are visible here. According to the first, the last syllable of the word-formation root is stressed, the second says that many suffixes draw the stress on themselves. Although specific regulations lead to a clear tendency to stress one of the two last syllables, it cannot be said that the Albanian stress falls on a specific syllable of the word. In all the works in which it was possible to formulate unambiguous rules, not the syllable but the mora was adopted as the unit of stress and, additionally, the division into light and heavy syllables was made (see especially Canalis 2007). This allowed the formulation of the rule that the penultimate mora of the word is stressed – it is the first mora of a long vowel or the second short vowel, counting from the right side of the word. Heavy syllables are two-mora syllables, i.e. those that are closed or contain a diphthong. It should be said that in the Albanian standard there are no phonologically long vowels. This is therefore an unconvincing rule, especially since at the end of words, phonetically vowels are longer in open syllables than in closed ones. Apart of this, what Albanian grammars call diphthong is in fact a group of two vowels that in a proper articulation should both be syllabic. There are also no clear opinions on the physical realization of prominence. The

literature on the subject most often refers to the increased intensity of the stressed vowel (e.g. Dodi 2004, Beci 2004). However, the complementary effect of all three prosodic features is also mentioned. In this paper, we will present preliminary results of a research aimed at establishing the physical correlate of stress in Albanian. The research was based on the material of the Albanian standard used in Kosovo.

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## Mapping the HEART: A comparative study of word associations in Balkan languages

In my recently completed doctoral research, I investigated points of divergence and convergence in conceptualizations of *heart* and associated emotions in Modern Greek, Romanian, and Albanian. This paper presents a discussion of a component of my doctoral research, which involved survey-based data aimed at gathering information on three key aspects related to the word *heart*: 1) the most common word associations and expressions with the word *heart*, 2) definitions of the term *heart*, and 3) the emotions contained in it. Together, these elements contribute to unique and overlapping conceptualizations.

A significant area of research in cognitive and cultural linguistics has explored how different cultures and languages conceptualize internal body organs (Maalej and Yu 2012; Sharifian, Dirven et al. 2008; Enfield 2002). Other investigations have focused on the semantic sources of words for emotions in ancient languages (Kurath 1921), as well as the emotions across various languages and cultures (Wierzbicka 1997; 1999; 2007). Additionally, researchers have studied the relationship

between metaphor and emotion and embodiment (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; 1993; 2003; Kövecses 1990; 2000; 2015) and the role of metaphor in foreign language instruction (Piquer-Píriz and Alejo-González, eds., 2020). This research explores the relationship between semantics, culture, and cognition in order to identify common human concepts within culture-specific configurations of the *heart*. While highlighting the embodied nature of conceptual metaphors, which explains why many languages share the same conceptual metaphors, I investigate the most common word associations and the extent to which some “universal” conceptualizations may lead to more entailments in one language compared to another. My focus is on the conceptualization of the *heart*, which varies significantly across cultures, particularly in its interpretation as a container. For example, Romanian data revealed various patterns of conceptualization: some are widespread across previously investigated languages, while others are culturally specific (such as HEART AS A STOMACH/BELLY, which is inherited from Latin).

The paper will draw on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) as developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999), the Key-Word Principle proposed by Wierzbicka (1997), and the theoretical model of cultural conceptualizations in language put forward by Sharifian (2007, 2011). By integrating these theoretical frameworks, we can approach the study of culture with the understanding that language is grounded in cultural cognition. The analysis will be based on linguistic evidence gathered from a six-question survey distributed among native speakers. The data, obtained from 66 surveys for Modern Greek, 57 for Albanian, and 50 for Romanian, will be analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively on three levels: lexical-structural, pragmatic, and conceptual, in order to identify the most salient semantic and conceptual domains in the three Balkan languages being examined.

**Keywords:** Balkan languages, Romanian, Albanian, Greek, heart, semantic domains, conceptual domains, emotions

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## **Serbian loan verb adaptation in Gurbet Romani: Evidence from corpus and experimental research**

**Background and aims.** The study examines the adaptation strategies employed by Gurbet Romani–Serbian bilinguals for Serbian verbs borrowed into Gurbet Romani (GR). GR spoken in Serbia is characterized by a high number of Serbian loan verbs, for which various indirect insertion strategies (Wohlgemuth 2009) are used. Previous studies show that Serbian verbs are integrated using two so-called characteristic vowels: either *-o-* (Serbian *čitati* 'read' > GR *čitol*) or *-i-* (Serbian *raditi* 'work' > GR *radil*), the latter seemingly being the more common, default strategy (Mirić & Ćirković 2022, Simonović 2024). The study aims to analyze the specific factors that determine



morphological complexity and, potentially, the theme vowel class of the Serbian verb play a role in guiding the adaptation of Serbian verbs into Gurbet Romani.

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### **A newcomer to the Balkans? Chinese in the linguistic landscape of Serbia**

When talking about the Balkans and the languages spoken here, Chinese is not among the first ones which comes to mind. Although diplomatic, economic and cultural ties between Beijing and the countries of the former Yugoslavia and Albania have existed since the middle of the last century, being based on a shared communist ideology, the Chinese presence in the region has not been a prominent one. Nevertheless, the last decade has witnessed China laying the groundwork for a deeper and long-term presence in the Western Balkans.

As far as Serbia is concerned, a significant number of Chinese citizens reside in this country, with estimates ranging from 15,000 to much larger numbers. The first wave of Chinese immigrants, mainly traders, arrived in the late 1990s, while the second wave was driven by Chinese investment in the last decade, particularly in mining and manufacturing. The community is mainly concentrated in Serbia's capital city, Belgrade, and in the cities of Bor and Zrenjanin, in Eastern Serbia and the province of Vojvodina, respectively.

The focus of this paper will be the presence of Chinese language in the linguistic landscape (LL) of Serbia, namely in two of the settlements with a significant share of Chinese population: Belgrade and Bor. Our paper is based on a corpus of more than 200 photographs of public signage in Chinese only or bilingual Chinese-Serbian or Chinese-English, collected during fieldwork conducted in 2024 and 2025 in the two regions under scrutiny. Despite the ever-growing number of Chinese people living in Serbia, the presence of Chinese in the LL, but also in other domains, has not been explored yet. The present empirical study addresses this gap by examining the visibility of Chinese in the LL across two Serbian cities with Chinese communities of different profiles and ages: while the community in Belgrade was founded roughly 30 years ago and is comprised mainly of traders, but has a rather heterogeneous profile and has been constantly growing, the one in Bor (and the surrounding villages) has been growing after 2018, when the Chinese Zijin Mining (紫金矿业) became the majority owner of the Bor copper mine and transformed it into the largest in Europe.

By analysing the corpus of photographed public signs from these two regions, this research investigates the visibility of Chinese in the LL both quantitatively and qualitatively. The findings reveal that the visibility of Chinese in the LL of Belgrade and Bor not only points to the commodification of language, which is expected and present all over Europe, to point to Chinese restaurant or shops, but has other functions, both informational and symbolic: depending on the region, it offers information to Chinese workers on construction sites or to Chinese inhabitants of specific settlements, it signifies Chinese identity or its hybridization, and also serves as a means to preserve traditional Chinese culture. This study underscores the importance of understanding the role of new minority languages in the LL of the Balkans, contributing to a more comprehensive view of Serbia's multilingual and multicultural context.

### (Anti)balkanisms in Gallipoli Serbian

This paper investigates the presence, function and typology of *balkanisms* as well as *antibalkanisms* – features resisting convergence, in the sense of Sobolev (2011; cf. Božović 2025) – in the speech of Gallipoli Serbs, in order to examine how an intensive contact with Greek, Turkish and Balkan Slavic languages has shaped the morphosyntactic structure of Gallipoli Serbian. By analyzing the inventory and distribution of (anti)balkanisms in Gallipoli Serbian, the paper aims to contribute to our understanding of how areal influences persist in migrant and minority dialects, and what they reveal about the dynamics of language contact, retention and change.

Gallipoli Serbs were a community resettled likely from the area around the town of Jagodina, in present-day Serbia, to the Gallipoli Peninsula in Thrace in the 1600s, eventually relocating to Pehčevo, in present-day North Macedonia, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Being isolated from the core area of the Štokavian diasystem, the speech of Gallipoli Serbs developed along somewhat divergent path. As a Štokavian “island variety” in Thrace, being in close contact with dialectal Greek, Turkish and Bulgarian, and more recently with Macedonian, the dialect offers an excellent case study of contact-induced (micro)variation and change. Before extinction, it was described in a monograph *О говору ђалиџољских Срба* [On the Speech of Gallipoli Serbs] by Pavle Ivić (1957), which is the primary source for our data.

The paper focuses, in particular, on the following Gallipoli Serbian constructions, involving Old Štokavian archaisms as well as contact-induced and internal innovations:

- 1) the case system and case syncretism patterns in the declension, in particular the merger of locative and genitive plural in nouns, and location marking strategies in general
- 2) in the conjugation, optionally double-marked future formation *ja (ćem) kupićem*, alongside more Balkan-like constructions such as *ćemo da idemo*, *će čekamo zimu* etc.
- 3) analytic comparison with *jos (još)*, with parallels in Turkish and Thracian Greek dialects

Due to the specific position of Gallipoli Serbian at the easternmost periphery of the Balkans in the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, some of its characteristic constructions such as these are calqued directly from Greek and Turkish, rather than via other Balkan Slavic varieties or Balkan Romance and

Albanian, which otherwise form the core of the Balkan Sprachbund. As such, coupled with features resisting convergence, such as the archaisms in the case system, they may represent a possible window into the earlier stages of contact-induced grammaticalisation in the Balkan languages.

**Keywords:** Gallipoli Serbian, (anti)balkanisms, dialect syntax, grammaticalisation

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## ***Dirlada, jas odam Skopje – Atina. Differential Place Marking*** **in Balkan Slavic and beyond**

The goal of this study is to further broaden our understanding of the distribution and the mechanisms of Differential Place Marking (Haspelmath 2019), also known as zero-marking of spatial relations (Stolz et al. 2014), in Balkan Slavic/Macedonian. These marking patterns have not only been documented in Balkan Slavic (example 1), but also in Aromanian (example 2), Greek, and Albanian (Sandfeld 1930: 111).

(1) <i>site</i>	<i>sel'an-i-∅</i>	<i>'od-el-e</i>	<i>cărkov-∅</i>
all.PL	villager(M)-PL-INDF	go.IPFV-PTCP-PL	church(F)-SG.INDF

‘All the villagers went to church.’ (Balkan Slavic, Sandfeld 1930: 111)

(2) <i>mi</i>	<i>duc</i>	<i>Sărun-ă</i>
I.ACC	go.1sg.prs	Thessaloniki(F)-NOM/ACC.SG.INDF

‘I go to Thessaloniki.’ (Aromanian, Sandfeld 1930: 111)

Vidoeski (1999: 25) considered the ‘loss of the preposition’ one of the ‘newer Balkanisms’ in Macedonian arguing that such patterns are most frequent in the Western and Southern dialects of Macedonian (Vidoeski 2000: 20). However, he neither specified whether these patterns completely overlap within the different dialect groups, nor whether there are different tendencies among local varieties. This would be crucial as typological studies (Stolz et al. 2014) and a dialectological study of such patterns in the Aromanian varieties (Winistörfer et al. 2025) have shown that there can be both inter-variational and intravariational differences in these marking patterns. Therefore, this study aims at answering these open questions and shed new light on the phenomena from a Balkan perspective.

For the analysis, I consider different linguistic transcripts of local Macedonian varieties (among others Ugrinovski 1962; Peev 1988; Vidoeski 2000; Labroska 2008; Karanfilovski 2013; Escher and Winistörfer 2021). The data are then combined in a linguistic dataset and analysed through quantitative and qualitative methods from typology and dialectology. The results show that Vidoeski’s observations are *grosso modo* valid. Zero-marking of spatial relations seems to be frequent in the Western and Southern varieties. Nonetheless, the spatial distribution is more complex and far from black-and-white. There are indeed diatopic as well as semantic differences in the marking patterns of Differential Place Marking in the Macedonian/Balkan Slavic varieties. Zero-marking patterns do not seem to be grammaticalised to the same degree in all of them. Furthermore, the study shows that these marking patterns of Differential Place Marking also differ from the patterns attested in Aromanian (Winistörfer et al. 2025) and Greek (Holton et al. 1997: 335).

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### **Clitic doubling as a Micro-Contact phenomenon in peripheral South Slavic**

This paper investigates the role of endogenous vs. exogenous change in the syntactic makeup of clitic doubling (CD) in peripheral South Slavic varieties, primarily focusing on Torlak, with comparative references to Molise Slavic and Burgenland Croatian.

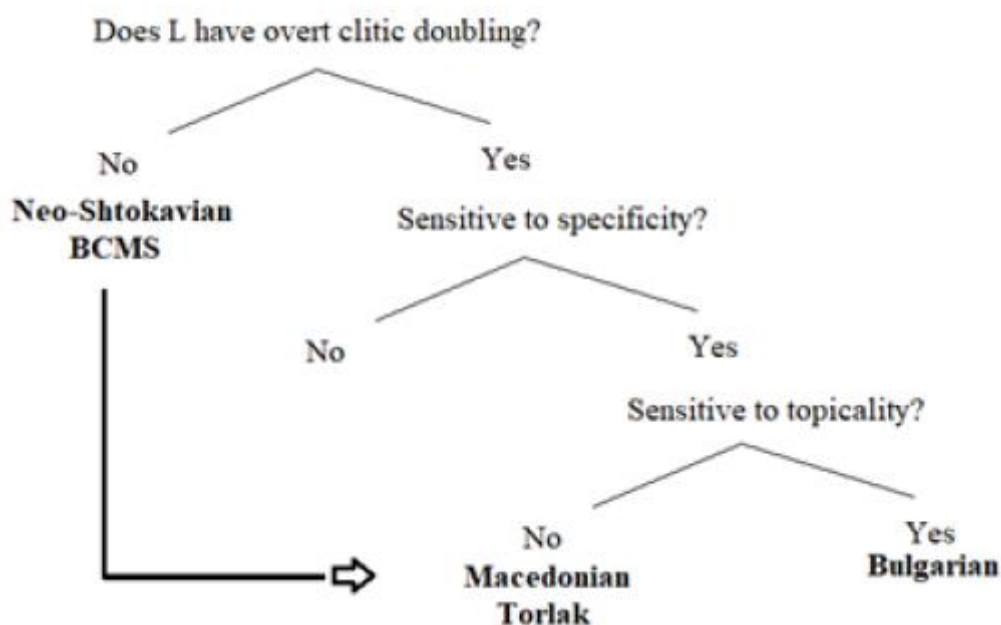
CD is a well-established feature of the Balkan Sprachbund (Tomić 2006; Friedman 2007; Tomić 2011), but it is absent in Old Church Slavonic (Kallulli & Tasmowski 2008), suggesting that its presence in modern Slavic results from language contact rather than internal development. In Torlak, CD emerges through language contact with Macedonian and Bulgarian, both of which have a very rich system of clitics.

Using the framework of Parameter Hierarchies (Roberts & Holmberg 2010; Roberts 2019), I argue that CD in Torlak arises from a reparametrization of its pronominal system (on the contrary of Neo-Shtokavian BCMS), under the influence of Macedonian (and possibly Bulgarian). Torlak consistently doubles [+specific] direct objects, mirroring Macedonian, where CD is obligatorily tied to specificity (Rudin 1997; Franks & King 2000).



I argue that this reparametrization can be understood through the concept of the *catapult effect* (Ledgeway, Schifano and Silvestri, in press), which refers to a sudden shift in a language's parametric space due to sustained contact with another language, as represented in Figure 1. This shift is not gradual, but rather a “jump” in the syntactic system, driven by the introduction of new patterns from the contact language. In Torlak, this results in the doubling of [+specific] direct objects, as shown in (1):

- (1) *Nas ni sestrata iz ambulantu gleda kroz naočare*  
 us us.CL nurse.DEF from clinic watch.PRES.3SG through glasses  
*i ne ni pušta unutra.*  
 and not us.CL let.PRES.3SG in  
 ‘The nurse from the clinic stares at us through her glasses and does not let us in.’  
 (Milosavljević and Živojinović, in press)



**Figure 1.** A simplified parameter hierarchy for Torlak

For the purpose of this talk, I will focus on the following research questions: (i) How does sustained contact with Macedonian and Bulgarian shape the emergence and variation of clitic doubling in Torlak? (ii) How does clitic doubling function in other peripheral South Slavic, such as Molise Slavic and Burgenland Croatian, which are in contact with Romance and Germanic varieties

but not with languages like Macedonian and Bulgarian, which have a very rich system of clitics? (iii) Finally, what does this tell us about how contact operates in shaping syntactic phenomena?

Molise Slavic, in contact with Italian and Molisan, exhibits clitic doubling that mirrors the Southern Italian model of clitic topicalization and object fronting (Breu 2019). This illustrates a hybrid contact system, where Slavic syntax replicates the Romance structure. In contrast, Burgenland Croatian, influenced by Germanic varieties, lacks CD, suggesting that object doubling emerges as a replica. Indeed, CD is attested in Southern Italian varieties, but not in Germanic. These micro case studies imply that language contact operates on the level of localized areals, contra the idea of generalized Balkanisms (cf. Joseph 2010).

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